

Senate Resolution 54

By: Tolleson of the 20th, Harp of the 29th, Starr of the 44th, Bulloch of the 11th and Hudgens of the 47th

ADOPTED

A RESOLUTION

Creating the Joint "Future of Georgia Forestry" Study Committee; and for other purposes.

WHEREAS, since 1920, the General Assembly has passed laws relating to forest products, forestry production, and forestry protection; and

WHEREAS, these laws and subsequent programs form a strong foundation for forest policy; and

WHEREAS, current stresses to Georgia's forest products markets mandate a reexamination of Georgia's forest policy in Georgia; and

WHEREAS, forestry is the state's major land use which supports one of Georgia's leading industries in this state, creating 136,000 jobs and contributing a \$20.2 billion economic impact in this state; and

WHEREAS, Georgia's 23.8 million acres of forest land occupy two-thirds of the state's total land area; and

WHEREAS, 23.8 million acres of Georgia's forest land, more than that of any other state, are available for commercial use, of which 72 percent is owned by private, nonindustrial landowners; and

WHEREAS, timber is the highest value crop in this state, and Georgia remains one of the top pulp and paper producers in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Georgia's forests are not only economically important, but also provide vital environmental and social benefits; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Forestry Commission reports a marked decline in Georgia's forest industry from \$30.5 billion in 2001 to \$20.2 billion in 2003; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Forestry Commission has cited the need to substantially improve the economic performance, research and development, and marketing of the wide range of products and other benefits derived from Georgia's forests; and

WHEREAS, in light of the above issues it is now time to prepare a comprehensive plan for Georgia to sustain and expand the benefits of Georgia's forest lands and forest products industries.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA that there is created the Joint "Future of Georgia Forestry" Study Committee to be composed of 22 members, consisting of four members of the Senate to be appointed by the Committee on Assignments, one of whom shall be the chairperson of the Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee; four members of the House of Representatives to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be the chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture and Consumer Affairs; and, as ex officio members, the chairperson of the Senate Natural Resources Committee and the chairperson of the House Committee on Natural Resources who shall be cochairpersons of the study committee. The Senate Committee on Assignments shall appoint four additional members, one each from the following: the University of Georgia Warnell School of Forest Resources Center for Forest Business, the Georgia Farm Bureau Federation, the Georgia Forestry Commission, and the Georgia Department of Agriculture. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint two additional members, one each from the following: the Georgia Forestry Association and the Georgia Agribusiness Council. The Governor shall appoint six members, one of whom shall be from the environmental community and one of whom shall be a county commissioner. Either chairperson may call meetings of the committee. Such appointments shall be made by May 15, 2005, with the first meeting of the study committee to occur by June 15, 2005.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study committee may conduct such meetings at such times and places as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution. The legislative members of the study committee shall receive the allowances

authorized for legislative members of interim committees but shall receive the same for not more than five days unless additional days are authorized. The funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds appropriated to the Senate and House of Representatives. No allowance shall be paid for other members of the committee. The study committee shall make a report of its findings and recommendations, with suggestions for proposed legislation, if any, prior to December 1, 2005. The study committee shall stand abolished on December 31, 2005.